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LATVIAN ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES
INTERNAL SECURITY - R

On November 22, 1963, Reverend Agonis Klaupiks, Relief Director, Baptist World Alliance, 1628 16th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., was interviewed.

Background

Reverend Klaupiks advised that he resided at the World Alliance headquarters while in Washington, D. C., but has his permanent address at Baptist Parish of Latvians in Bucks County, Rural Free Delivery 3, Quakertown, Pennsylvania. Klaupiks stated that his father was Janis Klaupiks, who is deceased. Reverend Klaupiks stated he is acquainted with many of the Latvian emigres in the United States, many of whom he sees during his frequent lecture tours throughout the United States. Klaupiks stated that he also shows various films which he has prepared commemorating various famous Latvian personages and holidays, and he travels to various cities narrating these films. During the course of these trips he is able to re-establish old relationships with his many Latvian acquaintances.

Trip to Soviet Latvia

Klaupiks discussed his recent trip to Soviet Latvia as a member of a cultural exchange group sponsored by the United States Department of State (USDS). He said that he was able to see many of his old friends and again observe the changes taking place in Latvia. During the course of his stay he had received a number of documents from a woman of many years acquaintance, whom in fact he had married long ago in his church in Latvia. She asked that the documents be taken and published in the United States. He said that he was hesitant about taking these documents

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which consisted essentially of hand-written poems and notes regarding the conditions in Latvia. Klaupiks stated he made the mistake of taking these documents to his room whereupon he was visited by the KGB (Committee of State Security) and charged with receiving from a Soviet citizen, material detrimental to the Soviet Union. He stated that over the next three days he was interrogated by the KGB and accused of being a provocator, a spy and a person who was looking for a way to embarrass the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Klaupiks denied all of the accusations, and all of the materials he had received from different persons was removed by the KGB. Klaupiks explained that appearing in Latvia as a native Latvian, but now an American, is unbelievable in its effect upon the average Latvian. Everywhere he went Klaupiks stated that people pressed upon him poems, notes and messages of all kinds, asking that conditions within the country be made known to outsiders. He said many of these messages he refused to take, however, many were stuffed into his pockets.

While in his hotel room which was being searched, Klaupiks asked for a doctor since he had a very bad cold. A young woman doctor appeared and was quite open in her conversation with Klaupiks, much to his surprise. She told him about her job, her pay was 72 rubles per month, and the fact that she would receive a raise in a few years. She talked about her family and indicated both she and her husband worked to make ends meet.

After some days of interrogation the Soviets released Klaupiks with his assurance that he would not make an official complaint about this. Klaupiks said that he was treated well and at no time did any of the Soviets touch him physically.

Latvian Emigre Groups in the United States

With regard to the Latvian emigre groups in this country he said that they were essentially made up of various social and fraternity groups which are represented in the American Latvian Association (ALA). This is a National Organization with offices in Room 206-7 Edmonds Building, 917 15th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. The Chairman of this group is Professor Peter Leijnes of the University of Maryland, a leading sociologist and well thought of man in the Latvian community. Leijnes is married to an American woman thought to be of German extraction. Klaupiks named the officers of the ALA as follows:

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Secretary General	Bruno Albits
Information Officer	Gunars Melcrovics
Treasurer	Arvids Zageris, also known as Arvid Zagaris
Cultural Section	(First Name Unknown) Norvilis, who is in New York

With the exception of Norvilis, all officers are in Washington, D. C.

Reverend Klaupeks stated the membership is composed of persons who are interested in Latvian affairs, the restoration of a free Latvia, and is a cohesive force among the emigrants.

There are a number of Latvian fraternities, the members of which attended the University of Latvia or the University of Riga. He said that these groups hold their fraternity meetings, usually no women allowed, and talk over old times and engage in a social evening. Members of these fraternities are usually also members of the A.L.A. Although he was not acquainted with the names of all fraternity members of the various groups, Klaupeks was familiar with the fact that Evars Bervins, who was formerly employed by the Bureau of Public Roads and who resided at 1567 Colonial Terrace, Arlington, Virginia, would soon leave his employment here and move to New York. Bervins will be going to work for a wealthy Latvian builder, Janis Richman in the building business. Klaupeks did not know the exact date of departure. Bervins is the chairman of the Latvian Youth Association. Klaupeks stated that in this connection all of the Latvian student groups met in Boston, Massachusetts, November 8, 9, and 12, 1943, to celebrate Latvian holidays.

Klaupeks stated that he is acquainted with Heinrich Bagastins who resided in New York, only by virtue of his association with the organization, Drugavas Vanagi, a veterans' organization of former members of the Latvian Legion who fought against the Russians during World War II. Klaupeks stated that this organization has been under attack by the Soviets for many years, the accusations being that the organization permits war criminals into its membership. In connection with this organization the Soviets are now circulating a film in this country called "Vilka". This film, which Klaupeks was invited to see in Latvia during his last visit, is a propaganda type picture which purports to show the traitorous parts played in the history of Latvia by various members of Drugavas Vanagi, who are mentioned in the picture by name, and who are now in the United States.

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Shipments to Levin

Miscellaneous

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Zivlins, both of Washington, D. C., were members of the "Fraternitas Cursica".

Klaupikis identified Peter Krums as one Peteris Krumins. Source said that he met this man one time in New York about nine months ago when he had gone there to show and narrate a film about Latvia which he has prepared. Klaupikis stated that after the showing of the film there followed the usual social hour, at which time a man answering the description of Peter Krums, approached and introduced himself by his Latvian name of Peteris Krumins. He congratulated Klaupikis on his narration of the film and said that he was a merchant seaman. He went on to state that as a seaman he made frequent trips to Europe and has gone into Latvia a number of times as a tourist. Krumins extolled the progress being made in Latvia and said that while in the country he stayed with his relatives and when he decided to stay on longer, simply had his visa extended. Krumins told Klaupikis that he had plans to lead a tourist group on a tour of Latvia this past summer, however, Klaupikis does not know if this trip actually took place. Klaupikis said that there was a group of Latvians who visited Latvia this year from New York, however, he does not know if this group was under the direction of Krumins.

Klaupikis said he was surprised to hear of all of this activity in and about Latvia from Krumins. Klaupikis stated he has visited Latvia a number of times since World War II, both as a member of the Baptist World Alliance and also as a member of official United States cultural delegations. He has had considerable experience with the Soviets as regards the obtaining and extension of visas and also the obtaining of permission to stay with relatives while visiting the USSR. He said he was amazed with the apparent ease with which Krumins arranged matters during his trip, if in fact, he actually did these things. If true, Klaupikis stated Krumins has "interesting connections".

Inquiry was made as to whether Klaupikis ever knew that Peter Krums owned a tavern in Brooklyn, New York. He said he did not but related the following "interesting" story:

He said that there now resides in Brooklyn, New York, one Elza Zebrenska, maiden name, who was formerly a famous opera star in Latvia. He stated that in about 1933 or 1939, much to the surprise of the Latvian emigre community, in the United States, Zebrenska went to Latvia to visit with her relatives. While in Latvia, she was featured on radio and television, over which media she made political statements extolling the progress being made in Latvia and the freedom existing there. She was interviewed by the press on a number of occasions and her utterances were in the same favorable vein to the regime. Upon her return to

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the United States, she was besieged by many in the Latvian community for some explanation as to her actions. Klaupeks said she has never uttered a word as to what she did in Latvia and has refused to discuss this with anyone.

In 1960, Zebrenska made another trip to Latvia and, in fact, had somehow arranged to give a concert in Riga, Latvia. This concert, according to Klaupeks, was poorly attended and received a poor press. After some time, Zebrenska again returned to this country and was again mute about her trip and has not, to the knowledge of Klaupeks, discussed the trip with anyone. Klaupeks stated that the whole purpose of his conveying this information is that Zebrenska is reportedly married to a man who owns a tavern in Brooklyn. Klaupeks stated that he does not know the name of this person, but it was interesting to him that Klumins also owned a tavern and had apparent ease in arranging trips to Latvia as did Zebrenska.